

(14)  
A  
LETTER

To the REVEREND  
Dr. BRADFORD,

Occasioned by his

SERMON

Preached before the

KING

At St. James's Chapel,

JANUARY 19. 17<sup>17</sup>/<sub>18</sub>.

ENTITLED,

*The Nature of Christian Union, and the  
Method of restoring it.*

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St. MARK ii. 21.

*No Man — seweth a piece of new Cloth on an old Garment: else  
the new piece that filled it up, taketh away from the old, and  
the Rent is made worse.*

---

L O N D O N,

Printed for JAMES BETTENHAM, at the Crown  
in Pater-noster-Row. 1718.

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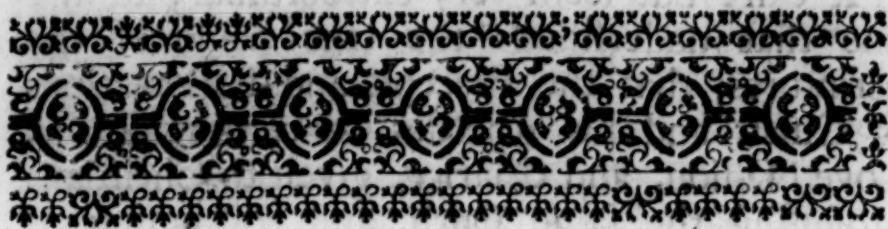
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As soon as I found a piece of new Cloth on my old Garment: I  
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LONDON,

Printed for James BETTMAN, at the Crown  
in Pall-mall near St. James's Church, 1718.



A

# LETTER

To the REVEREND

Doctor *Bradford*, &c.

*Reverend Sir,*

**W**HEN I saw your Sermon entituled, *The Nature of Christian Union, and the Method of restoring it*, advertized in the publick Papers, I was extreamly pleased that a Person of your Learning and Judgment had preached upon a Subject of that Moment and Importance, in so great an Audience. And I was the more pleased that what you delivered there met with a favourable Reception, being well assured that neither your Understanding nor your Integrity would suffer you to betray or weaken the true Rights and Interests of the Christian Church, out of base and sordid Views.

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It can't but seem very extraordinary to any one that understands the true Sense of the Scriptures, that the Precepts and Exhortations of Christ and his Apostles concerning Peace, Love, Union, and Charity, given to Christians professing the same Faith, and continuing in the Unity and Communion of the Church, should in Discourse and Writings be generally extended to patronize the erroneous Opinions of those Persons who corrupt the Faith, who break thro' all the Ties and Obligations of Christian Love and Charity, who forsake the Communion of the Church, and multiply Divisions without Number, and without End. It is certainly a gross Abuse of the holy Scriptures thus to pervert them to a Meaning and Intention quite different from and contradictory to what they were designed, and to make those Passages in the Sacred Writings, which were intended to preserve the Peace and Unity of the Church, an Excuse for the Sin of Separation. Many Instances might be given of this notorious Abuse in modern Writings and Sermons, but at present I shall only name one, which I find in a Sermon of the Reverend Dr. Hayley lately preached before the King, and since printed.

His Text is in Coloss. 3. 14. *And above all these things put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness.* If he had only been at the Pains to read the next Verse following, he would have found, that the Precept was given to Christians united in one *Body, Society, or Church,*

Church, and that the End of recommending the Duties of Humility, Charity, and Forbearance, was to preserve them in Unity and sacred Communion. But what Use doth this learned Doctor make of this Text? He laments the Hatred and Animosities of Christians, but offers not one Argument, as his Subject naturally led him, to shew the Sin or Unreasonableness of leaving the Church, or to persuade Men to be reconciled to it. But in Page 21 he judiciously urgeth this weighty Plea in the Behalf of all Dissenters: *It is highly fit and reasonable that Charity should be extended towards such of our Brethren whose Opinions differ from our own, because it is possible they may be in the right, and we may be in the wrong.* This I must confess is very notable Reasoning, and tends to the great Edification of his Christian Reader. The Dissenters must acknowledge their eternal Obligation to him who, tho' never so contradictory to each other, out of his extensive Charity he supposeth it *possible may be in the right, and we may be in the wrong.* I very much question whether any Pretences of this Gentleman \* to a better Understanding than his Neighbours, can justify such Reasoning.

I am very well assured that you are a Person of too great Ingenuity and Sense of Duty, to approve of such Conduct and Behaviour, *that a Chaplain to the King, a Residentiary of a Cathedral*

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\* Serm. p. 10,

*Church, and a Doctor in Divinity*, should urge Scripture contrary to its true Meaning and Intention, in Disparagement of and Opposition to the Church, of which he is a Presbyter, and in Favour of Schismatics, whom, according to the Rule of *St. Paul*, and the Practice of the Primitive Church, he ought to avoid, as those who † *walk disorderly*, who \* *cause Divisions and Offences*, contrary to the Practice and the Doctrine of the purest Ages of Christian Antiquity.

Clergymen who preach after this Manner, must be supposed without any Breach of Charity, to be † *addicted to some Party*, whose Interest, whether right or wrong, must be promoted; or perhaps they want to be revenged of some Person or Persons, who have been the Occasion of their receiving some Disappointment. These or the like base and sordid Ends are but too often the true Cause of such Behaviour.

But before I leave this Reverend Doctor to the Sense, if he hath any, of his Duty and Obligations to the Church, I challenge him to shew and make out that any one Text he hath quoted in his whole Sermon, relating to Unity, Forbearance, Love, or Charity, was intended by our Saviour or his Apostles, in Favour and Condescension to those, who did, or should break the Peace, and forsake the Communion of the Church. And if he cannot answer this

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† 2 Thess. 3. 6.      \* Rom. 16. 17.      † Sermon. p. 28.

Charge, let him acknowledge, that like his Friends the Dissenters, he hath done nothing in that Sermon but abused the Phrase of Scripture, and grossly misapplied those Passages of it, to the Encouragement and support of Division and Separation, which were intended, as might easily be shewn, and will appear to any judicious Reader, for the Preservation of Unity, and Agreement in External Communion; and with all his present Possessions and Titles, as well as future Hopes, let him seriously consider those Words of our Saviour, \* *Whosoever shall break any the least of these Commandments, and shall teach Men so to do, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

And I hope, that the last curious and excellent Treatise published by Doctor *Sherlock*, which to the Admiration and Conviction of all Readers, clears up the Sense of some Passages in *St. Peter's* and *St. Paul's* Epistles, will prevail with all Divines and others, not to quote Scripture by the Ear, but by the Understanding; not to raise Doctrines upon Texts of the New Testament, without first enquiring into the true Meaning and Intention of them.

I ask your Pardon for detaining you in the Consideration of an Affair, which I believe you are no way interested or concerned in, and proceed to the Consideration of your judicious and excellent Sermon.

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\* Matth. 5. 19.

The Words of our Saviour, which you have chosen for your Text, in the most emphatical and expressive Manner inculcate the Necessity of Internal and External Union among all Christians; and shew not only the Duty of the Apostles and his immediate Followers to continue in Peace and Concord, but likewise that all Christians are under the same Law and Obligation to the End of the World. And you have very clearly and exactly explained what our Saviour meant by the Union which he prayed for among his Disciples, *viz.* an Union of Love and Charity; an Unity in the Profession of one and the same Faith; and an Unity in External Communion and Worship. I think nothing more can be thought necessary to preserve the Christian Church in Unity, Peace, and Concord, and to fulfil the Prayer of our Blessed Saviour, *that they which believe on him may be one, as his Father is in him, and he in his Father, that the World may believe that he hath sent him.*

Having excellently well explained these Three Particulars, you proceed to consider the present disunited State of Christendom, and particularly of Protestants, who, as you with great Reason complain, *\* are parted into different and separate Communions, as if they were not all Members of one Catholick Church.*

I could have wished that the Time and Occasion had permitted you to have explained in

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\* Sermon. p. 20.

your Sermon the Reason why Protestants are now so divided into different Communions, which certainly is, that the greatest Part of them have deserted the ancient Form of Government and Discipline of the Church, which preserved all the most numerous and distant Churches in one Body, Society, and perfect Agreement: They were united under the Direction of such Bishops and Pastors, who with perfect Unanimity observed the Canons, and conformed to the Rules and Customs of the whole Church. And this Method preserved a perfect Union in Worship, † *As in Faith and Love, among the several particular Churches, which altogether made up that one Catholick Church, which we profess in our Creed to acknowledge.* And I wish with all my Heart, that all Protestants did not only profess to *acknowledge one Catholick Church*, but did really and unfeignedly believe themselves in that Profession.

But you can't but be very sensible, that many Protestants will neither acknowledge the Doctrine, nor the Laws and Government of the Catholick Church of the first and purest Ages. The Presbyterians, especially those of these Kingdoms, abhor Episcopacy as an Antichristian and abominable Usurpation, and engage themselves under the most sacred Ties and Obligations to extirpate and destroy it. The Independents, who are still more numerous and formi-

dable, and whose Power daily increaseth by the additional Strength of all loose, irreligious, and profane Persons ; by their Principles oppose the Doctrine of one Catholick Church, and all National and Diocesane Communion. And there is still another Party, and that supported by a powerful Interest, which destroys even Congregational Communion, and maintains, that all Christians are independent upon any visible Power on Earth in the Exercise of their Christianity, and are subject only to Christ. And the Socinians, who call themselves Protestants, and as such are admitted to Communion by the Arminians in *Holland*, are in their Principles Independents, and therefore cannot acknowledge any Obligation to Christian Communion, or the Doctrine of one Catholick Church.

This is the plain, and I think, the true Account of the Divisions among Protestant Churches, and likewise of this Church ; the Source and Original of all which is, that they have all departed from the Doctrine and Government of the Primitive Catholick Church, and refuse to submit to any Rule of Discipline, but what is the Product of their own Inventions, and agreeable to their secular Interests.

These being the Evils and the Diseases which all Protestant Churches labour and languish under, and which by necessary Consequence must ruin the Reformation it self, by eternal Divisions and Sub-divisions ; let us consider the Remedy proposed for the Cure of them.

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The Reverend and Learned Dr. *Hayley* saith, † *mutual Charity, and that alone, is comprehensive enough to unite the differing Sentiments of Christian Brethren.* Charity may unite Mens Affections, but I always thought that Reason and Judgment only could unite their Sentiments. He saith again, \* *that it is impossible all their Thoughts should exactly run in the same Channel.* I am of the same Opinion, if they are not guided and directed by one and the same Rule, but are left every one to follow their own Fancies and Imaginations. But I would ask this learned Divine, by what means the Primitive Christians all the World over continued for some Ages in Unity and Communion of Faith and Worship under the Direction of the Bishops and Pastors of the Church? And whatever is supposed to be the true Cause of Unity in those Times, must be thought sufficient and effectual to restore Unity to the present divided State of the Church.

But you, Sir, have declared your self of a very different Opinion from this Gentleman, and confess, † *that it is fit that every serious Christian should thoroughly lay to Heart the Evil of Division in the Church of Christ.* You have acknowledged, that for Christians to contend with, and divide from one another, is no slight Offence against God and our Redeemer. And by all proper Arguments you have endeavoured to evince the

† Serm. p. 20.

\* Ibid.

† Serm. p. 20.

Necessity of Church Communion, and shewn in what few Cases only Division and Separation is lawful and justifiable.

† You proceed in the latter part of your Discourse to consider the proper Methods for completing the Union of Christians, particularly of Protestants. In the Prosecution of this Particular you have proceeded with great Caution and Circumspection, as it became a wise and judicious Man to do; but I could wish that what you propose towards the attaining this good End had been expressed more intelligibly and clearly. But I shall endeavour to find out your Meaning, the best I can. You say, \* *that every Christian Church should take effectual care to lay no greater Restraints upon its Members than (all things duly considered) are necessary to Christian Communion.* Here I am at a loss to know what you mean by Restraints, and what to understand by that Expression of *all things duly considered*. If you mean, that the Conditions and Terms of Communion should be as easy and as unlimited as is consistent with the fundamental Truths of the Gospel, and the necessary Edification of the Members of the Church, I believe that no Protestant will dispute this Principle. If you mean any thing else, I hope you will condescend to explain it.

You say, † *that considering the Prejudices of Mankind arising from Complexion, Education, and*

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† Page 24.

\* Ibid.

† Ibid.

*Converse, something more seems expedient to be done to compleat the Union of Christians, i. e. as I understand it, something more than bare Reasoning, and endeavouring to convince Men of the Necessity of holding Communion with the Church. It cannot be denied but that the different Parties and Sects of Christians must have infected great Numbers of Persons with unreasonable Prejudices and Opinions, and that the Differences of their Temper and Complexion incline some to follow and adhere to one Sect, and some to another. But where is that Number of wise Men to be found, who can contrive a Form of religious Worship, that can be exactly accommodated to the different Prejudices of Men's several Education, Complexion, and Converse, and remove all their false Notions concerning the Nature of Things lawful, indifferent, or expedient? If the few Ceremonies the Church hath retained were changed or abolished, how shall any one be assured that such an Alteration will make any Profelytes? Have we not reason to fear on the other side that such a Change would give great Offence to the present Members of the Church, and that in the whole we should rather be Losers than Gainers by such a Condescension? This is only bare Reasoning, which I propose with as much Diffidence of the Truth of it, as you seem to shew in any of your Proposals.*

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You proceed further to say, \* *what should hinder amongst Protestants, but that the same Terms upon which a Man is made a Christian, should at the same time qualify him for being admitted to the Communion of any Church?* I don't fully understand the Meaning of this Question, and must content my self to answer it as far as I do understand it. I think that there can be no doubt but that the Confession of a true Faith, which entitleth a Man to Baptism, and being made a Member of the Church, entitleth him likewise to be admitted to the Communion of that or any other Church. But I am sure that so learned and judicious a Divine as you are will allow, that the very Form of Baptism delivered by our Saviour to his Disciples, supposeth also the Authority of the Church even to the World's End, and is comprehended in these Words, † *teaching them to do all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World.* I believe that you will allow, that neither the Profession of a right Faith, nor the Practice of the most severe and rigid Virtue, can denominate any Man a good Christian, without the Exercise of true Charity, and a ready Compliance in all things lawful, for the Harmony, Peace and Welfare of that Society or Church to which he belongs as a Member. And you are pleased to intimate thus much in your Sermon, \* *that the Nature of Human Socie-*

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\* Page 25.

† Matth. 28. 20.

\* Serm. p. 23, 24.  
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ty, and of the Church or Christian Society in particular, leads to all this, namely, never to make any Division, or to promote any Contention, without a very weighty Reason; but willingly and readily, for Order and Peace sake, to submit to the Rules and Customs of the Society of which we are Members, unless we cannot do it without offending God and wronging our own Consciences.

I have chose to transcribe this part of the Paragraph, because no Words can better express the Duty of Obedience and Submission of all Christians in Things not expressly determined by the Word of God. And I would not be thought designedly to suppress that Expression of *wronging our own Consciences*, tho' all Parties shelter themselves under that Refuge. For I must take the Liberty to declare, that the Man who is acted by Conscience, without respect to any known Law of God or Man, will be able to give but a very indifferent Account of his Actions † *in that Day when God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel*. Men in this World may deceive themselves and others with Pretences to Ignorance, Sincerity, and good Intentions, but I can by no means comprehend the Force of any Dictates of Conscience which are not grounded upon some known Law, nor how Mens Consciences can reasonably be supposed to prompt them to act, or not to act, but upon the Declaration and

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† Rom. 2. 16.

Knowledge of some such Law. And all Reasoning about Matters of Religion and Divine Revelation must for ever cease and be at an End, if Christians erect a Court of Conscience in their own Hearts, which cannot be governed and determined by the revealed Will of God, or by the Decisions of the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, in Things properly subject to their Jurisdiction and Authority.

Another Question you are pleased to ask, \* *Why should any truly Christian Church exclude from its Communion any such Persons as we have reason to believe our Lord will not exclude from his heavenly Kingdom, according to the Terms of the Gospel?* To which Question I think this short Answer may be sufficient: That any Church which excludes any Person from her Communion, whom she hath reason to suppose our Saviour will not exclude from the Kingdom of Heaven, commits a great and a wilful Sin in so doing.

You assert also, † *that the Matters in dispute amongst Protestants are generally acknowledged to be Opinions not so clearly and conspicuously determined in the holy Scriptures, as to be essential and fundamental Points of Christian Faith.*

This Passage is delivered with great Care and Caution, and the Expressions generally acknowledged, and clearly and conspicuously determined, guard it from many Inconveniences and

Exceptions that might be raised against it. I could wish that you had considered this Passage more fully and maturely, before you had published it. For I cannot but put you in mind that the *Presbyterians* of these Kingdoms reject Episcopacy; tho' confessed by all learned Men to be of Apostolical Institution; that the *Independents* destroy the very Essence and Being of any National Communion, and reject that Article of the Creed of believing in the holy Catholick Church; that the *Socinians* deny the Divinity and Præ-existence of our Saviour, and yet are owned and received to Communion as Christians and Protestants by some other Churches. I could instance likewise in *Quakers*, *Antinomians*, and *Anabaptists*, who all assume the Name of Protestants, and are called such by the Laws of this Kingdom, and yet dissent from the Church in Opinions, clearly and conspicuously determined in holy Scriptures, as essential and fundamental Points of the Christian Faith.

This Matter, which is the Subject of the greatest Difference in Opinion between you and me, must be determined by your declaring to what Sects or Denominations of Christians you give the Title of *Protestants*. For my own part, I can think of no other than those I have above named.

And here I must take the Liberty to declare, that it is of great Consequence to the Interest of Christianity, that the true Meaning and Notion of the Word *Protestant* should be fully settled and

and determined, whether it belongeth to all who protest against and deny the Usurpations of the See of *Rome*, whatever other Errors they may hold and maintain; or whether of Right it only belongs to those Christians, who are either Members of the Church of *England*, or of the *Lutheran* and reformed Churches abroad, whose Doctrines and Opinions we own to be the same in all *Essential and Fundamental Points of the Christian Faith*. I am very well assured, that you design to speak and write in such a Manner as to be understood, and not by an improper and confused Application of Words and Names, to make Evil pass for Good, and Good for Evil.

You cannot likewise but be sensible that the Word *Popery* is as much abused and perverted to the Disgrace and Prejudice of Christianity, and even by a Bishop of this Church applied to Ecclesiastical *Authority, Successions, Unity, and Assemblies of pious and learned Men*: and that he professeth a Zeal to *extinguish Popery amongst all within Doors, who profess and imagine they have shut it out*.

Neither can I think you are unacquainted with the pretty new Notion of *Protestant Popery*, which hath lately made such a Noise in the World. I only mention these Abuses and misapplication of these Words Protestant and Popery to shew, that there is an absolute Necessity to give them a fixed and a settled Meaning; and that Christians may not be abused and deceived by the confused Use of them, into Prejudices, Error, and Falshood.

You

You say further, \* *That upon the Principles of the Reformation, those Principles upon which all the Protestant Churches have separated from that of Rome, something of this Kind (i. e. of an Union among Protestants) seems highly expedient, and very practicable to be attempted.*

I could have wished that you had been pleased to explain and make the World sensible what these *Principles of the Reformation* were; for I am very well assured that no one is better able to explain these *Principles* than your self: But the Generality of Christians are as much abused and misled by the Word *Reformation*, as by that of Protestant or Papist.

If we may believe some Persons, the main Principle and Ground of the Reformation is, that every Christian according to his private Sense of the Meaning of Scripture, is to make out as well as he can a Christian Religion for himself, independently on all Church Power and Authority. I don't pretend, even in my Thoughts, to charge you with professing or abetting any such senseless Principle or Reasoning.

But I will presume to give my Sense of the *Principles of the Reformation*, which if it be wrong, I shall thank you, or any one else, who will favour the World with a better Account.

*Reformation*, in the most obvious and natural Meaning of the Word, implieth the restoring what was decayed and corrupted, to its Primitive Institution and Design. When we speak therefore of the Reformation of the Church,

according to the Propriety of Language, as well as the Nature of Things; we can understand nothing else by the Word *Reformation*, than the restoring the decayed and corrupted State of Christianity, to its pure and primitive Institution. And this Consideration naturally leads us into the true Notion of the *Principles of the Reformation*, which are, and can be no other than the Doctrine and Discipline of the Primitive Church, according to the Institution and Appointment of our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles, as it was explained and exemplified by the Writings and the History of the Practice of the Primitive Church of the first and the purest Ages.

I presume that no Christian of these Times can pretend to a greater Knowledge of the Practice and the Sense of the Apostles, than what was deliver'd to their immediate Successors. And we have no reason to suppose a greater Degree of Sincerity, Self-denial, and Integrity to prevail in a prosperous State of the Church, than in the State which was afflicted, persecuted, and distressed. *Reformation* therefore, if it proceeds upon a true Spirit of Christianity, and if it signifies any thing more than a base Sound to carry on secular Ends and Interests, can be understood of nothing else than to restore the decayed and corrupted State of the Christian Religion to its primitive Purity and Simplicity.

Tho' I am fully persuaded that this is a true Account of the *Principles of Reformation*, yet I shall draw no invidious Consequences from it, nor particularly compare the Practice and Execution

cution of all Parts of the Reformation, with the Rule which Christians pretended to regulate the Reformation by, and ought to have followed.

I am very sensible of the Darknes and Ignorance of the Times of the Papal Usurpation and Corruption, and that the *Reformers* themselves did not all of them understand the true Nature and Constitution of the Christian Church, and that some of them who did understand those Things, were obliged to unreasonable Compliances with the secular Powers, to secure their Protection and Defence against the Power of the Court of *Rome* and its Adherents. The Church was obliged to purchase a Reformation at a great Expence, both of its Spiritual and Temporal Interests.

And I perswade my self, that you and all others who understand the true Interests and Claims of the Church, will allow, that it still wants a further Reformation, and that it ought (when God's Providence shall permit) to approach still nearer to the Establishment and Constitution of the Primitive Church. And this seems to me the only Method of thoroughly pursuing the solid and true *Principle of Reformation*.

I can't therefore but agree with you, that upon these *Principles of Reformation*, upon which all *Protestant Churches* either did, or ought to have separated from that of *Rome*, an Union amongst Protestants is not only *expedient*, but a necessary and indispensable Duty, and without doubt will be found to be very *practicable*, when the several Sorts of Protestants shall have laid aside their private Interests, Partialities, and particular Opinions

pinions and Sentiments, and resign their Judgments to be directed and governed by the Laws and the Authority of the Catholick Church. I am sure you do not think I mean the Church of *Rome* by the Authority of the Catholick Church, but the concurrent Judgment and Practice of the Church of the Three first Centuries. And with what Reason any one that pretends to call himself a Christian, and to be a Member of the Church of the First-born now written in Heaven, can decline or refuse to submit to that Authority, is past my Understanding and Comprehension.

I will suppose, but not grant, that Protestants do not differ in Essential and Fundamental Points of the Christian Faith, but you know and see how fond, partial, and stiff every one of them is to the Way and Manner of his own particular Sect and Company, that not any of them can be prevailed upon to yield and give up the most inconsiderable and minute Circumstance or Opinion, for the sake of Order, Peace, and Unity. And I cannot think it reasonable to suppose, that Protestants as they are now divided and disunited upon the account of their several private Humours and Fancies, will ever be prevailed upon to submit to any one Party. For by this means some one Party amongst them would conquer and subdue all the rest; and who can hope that the Majority will ever submit to the smaller Number?

It seems much more reasonable to be expected, that all of them should quit and lay aside those Notions and Opinions of Discipline and Church

Church Government, which are wholly new, and but of Yesterday, and unanimously submit to the Dictates and Authority of the Catholick Church, and to that Form of Government which always and every where prevailed in the Churches of the Saints. All other Expedients towards Christian Peace and Union seem to be impracticable, and liable to endless Difficulties and Objections; but an Accommodation of the Differences of Protestant Churches upon these Grounds and Principles, must naturally tend to the Union and Reformation of the whole Church.

For the Church of *Rome* must then be ashamed to see all Protestants united and agreed in what she her self must acknowledge to have been the true and Primitive Rule of Christianity, and not reform her self according to the same Standard and Principle. And indeed I cannot think that any Reformation whatsoever is justifiable, or to be defended upon any other Ground or Principle. For we see plainly that Christians may renounce some Errors, and protest against them, and yet afterwards fall into and embrace Errors of another Kind equally or more destructive and pernicious to Christians; so that with them the latter End is the same, if not worse than the beginning. And I persuade my self, that where this hath happened, you will allow that such a Change doth not deserve the Name of Reformation.

You say, \* *This would be a blessed State of the Church of Christ, when every honest upright Member of it, wherever he lived, would be found worshipping*

*Almighty God and our Redeemer with one Heart and one Mouth.*

This certainly *would be a blessed State of the Church*, and is what all good Christians desire, and ought by all Means to endeavour to accomplish. But it is with great Reason to be apprehended, that this blessed and glorious End and Design is not practicable and to be attained, considering the present unaccountable Humours and Opinions of many who are called Protestants.

Suppose that I could name to you a *Protestant Church*, which is very considerable for its Figure, and the Number of Communicants, which rejects all *set Forms* of Prayer as unlawful in the Worship of God; and which hath excluded the reading of the Scriptures, the Lord's Prayer, and *Gloria Patri* out of its Service, and whose Ministers constantly pray and preach against Episcopacy. I would ask you upon this Supposition, whether it be safe or advisable for any Christian, who should *travel*, or be obliged to reside in that Country, to join in Communion with that Church, tho' it doth *profess all the Essential and Fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith*, and be defiled with no other *sinful Mixture* than what I have mentioned.

You cannot but be informed that many Preachers of Congregations called *Protestants*, teach, that *there is no Condition for the Covenant of Grace, that Justification is Revelation of Predestination to Glory, and no Sin to be seen in God's Elect, and that the Principle of Salvation is neither Faith nor good Works, but Christ living and abiding in the Heart.*

And

And yet all these Persons with many others shelter themselves under the common Name of Protestants, and charge their Separation and Division upon the Ceremonies and the Rigour of the established Church. And the Learned Dr. *Hayley* is so kind to them all as to say, that *it is possible they may be in the Right, and we in the Wrong.*

It is easy to make Harangues upon Love, Union, Peace, and Charity, and to charge all Differences and Divisions upon Rigor, Restraints, and Humane Impositions. But it is impossible that any Church or Society of Men whatsoever, tho' the most wise, moderate, and charitable, can find a Method for uniting Men of such different and opposite Opinions, who will be concluded by no Law but that of their own Fancies and Imaginations. What Forbearance can be shewn in Errors destructive to the Foundation of Faith, and the Hope of Salvation? If ever the *State of the Church be reduced to its primitive Standard, and rendred like to that of the Apostolical Times*, it must not be affected by Presbyterian, Erastian, or Independent Principles, but the true Primitive Apostolical Government must be restored, the Rules and Canons of the Primitive Church must be revived, and put in Force and Execution: For nothing but the same Causes can produce the same Effects: Nothing but the same Doctrine and Discipline which was delivered and left by the Apostles to the Primitive Church, can restore Harmony, Peace, and Concord between the several Bishops and Pastors of the present Church, and unite the People under them committed to their Charge.

And

And when the Almighty shall move the Hearts of all the Governours of Christian Kingdoms to restore the Church to its Essential Rights, Powers, and Privileges, and shall make them think it their Interest, as well as their Duty, to contribute to this great Work; there can be no Doubt, but that by his Assistance and his Blessing, they will be able to accomplish and effect this desired Union.

I hope you are convinced by the reading of this Letter, that there is nothing contained in it which is designed as a Personal Injury or Reflection, nor any other Intention in this short View of your Sermon, than to desire from you (if you think fit so far to oblige the World) a distinct and particular Account of Protestant and Reformation Principles, which, I believe you are sensible, are generally mistaken and misunderstood. If you shall please to comply with my earnest Desire, to set this Matter in a clear Light, I perswade my self, that whatever you in your great Judgment shall offer upon this Subject, will be acceptable to all Learned, Judicious, and Pious Christians.

SIR, I am

Your most obedient,

faithful, and humble Servant.

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